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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, July 11, 2006

AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN INDIANA: THIRD QUARTER 2005

The average weekly wage in Vanderburgh County increased 7.5 percent from the third quarter of 2004 to the third quarter of 2005, the largest advance among Indiana's seven counties with employment of 75,000 or more. Marion County had the second highest wage growth, 7.1 percent; Hamilton County was a distant third with an increase of 4.7 percent. Marion County had the highest average weekly wage level in the State at \$819, followed by Hamilton County (\$795) and Lake County (\$700). (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Jay A. Mousa noted that among Indiana's seven largest counties, two reported wage growth above the national increase of 6.1 percent, and two had wages above the national level of \$777.

Wage levels

Wages in the two highest-paying counties in Indiana, Marion and Hamilton, were either above or close to \$800, placing them in the top third of the national ranking among the 322 largest counties in the U.S. Average weekly wages in Marion County were about 5 percent above the national average and ranked 81st highest; wages in Hamilton County ranked 99th.

Among the other five Indiana counties, wages were fairly close together ranging from \$666 in St. Joseph to \$700 in Lake, a difference of only \$44. Average weekly wages in the lowest-paying county placed St. Joseph among the bottom third in the nationwide ranking at 250th. Also falling into the bottom third were the counties of Vanderburgh (\$676, 235th) and Allen (\$683, 227th), while Elkhart County (\$687, 214th) and Lake (\$700, 199th) placed in the bottom half of the ranking.

Across the country, average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 115 of the largest 322 U.S. counties. New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,419. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average wage of \$1,403, followed by Arlington, Va. (\$1,292), San Mateo, Calif. (\$1,268), and Washington, D.C. (\$1,265).

Nationwide, there were 206 counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2005. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$486), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$499), Horry, S.C. (\$505), and Webb, Texas, and Yakima, Wash. (\$525 each).

At the state level, the average weekly wage in Indiana was \$689, \$88 below the nationwide figure, ranking 29th highest among the 50 states and the District of

Columbia. (See table 2.) The five highest wage levels in the nation were in the District of Columbia (\$1,265), Connecticut (\$966), Massachusetts (\$947), New York (\$941), and New Jersey (\$928). Average weekly wages in this group were 19 percent or more above that for the nation. At the other end of the scale, four states had wage levels averaging 75 percent or less of national earnings: Montana (\$563), South Dakota (\$567), Mississippi (\$573), and North Dakota (\$581).

Over-the-year changes

Two of Indiana's seven large counties recorded wage growth above the national increase of 6.1 percent in the third quarter of 2005. (See table 1.) As mentioned, Vanderburgh County's 7.5-percent wage gain was the largest increase in the State and 56th highest in the nation. The average weekly wage in Marion County increased 7.1 percent and was among the top one third in the ranking at 71st.

St. Joseph was the only county in the State, and one of only five in the nation, not to record an increase in weekly wages from September 2004 to September 2005. It's -0.1-percent wage decline ranked 310th among the 322 largest counties in the U.S, very close to the bottom. The remaining large counties in Indiana—Allen, Elkhart, Hamilton, and Lake—experienced wage growth ranging from 4.0 to 4.7 percent, placing them in the bottom third of the national ranking.

Among the largest counties, Passaic, N.J., led the nation in growth in average weekly wages with an increase of 19.0 percent over the year. Fort Bend, Texas, was second with 15.4-percent growth, followed by the counties of Boulder, Colo. (13.8 percent), and San Mateo, Calif. and Harrison, Miss. (12.7 percent each). The average weekly wage gains for Harrison, Miss., and Orleans, La. (10.7 percent), were boosted as a result of the disproportionate job and pay losses in lower-paid industries following Hurricane Katrina.

In addition to St. Joseph County, Indiana, four other counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Clayton County, Ga., had the largest decrease, -5.1 percent, followed by the counties of Benton, Ark. (-1.2 percent), Trumbull, Ohio (-0.6 percent), and Saginaw, Mich. (-0.4 percent).

At the state level, the average weekly wage in Indiana increased 5.2 percent, ranking it 40th among the 50 states and District of Columbia. The neighboring states of Illinois and Ohio had wage gains averaging 5.9 and 5.5 percent, respectively. (See table 2.) The highest over-the-year wage growth in the third quarter of 2005 was recorded by Arizona (8.2 percent), then Florida (8.1 percent) and Wyoming (8.0 percent); the lowest, by Michigan and Rhode Island (4.1 percent each).

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 8.6 million employer reports cover 132.9 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties,

metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Technical Note below) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2004 is available for sale from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250, telephone 866-512-1800, outside Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is 202-512-1800. The fax number is 202-512-2104. The bulletin is now available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn04.htm>. Also, the quarterly press release, County Employment and Wages, presents employment and wage data for the largest counties in the U.S. and is available at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Midwest Information Office in Chicago at (312) 353-1880 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

The measures of employment and wages reported in this news release reflect the impact of Hurricane Katrina and ongoing labor market trends. Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, with catastrophic effects in parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. This event occurred after the August QCEW reference period and before the September period. Its effects are first reflected in the September QCEW employment counts and the wage totals for the third quarter of 2005. QCEW nonresponse adjustment methods were modified for September 2005 to better reflect the impact of the hurricane in parts of Louisiana and Mississippi. For more information, see the QCEW section of the Katrina coverage on the BLS Web site (<http://www.bls.gov/katrina/qcewquestions.htm>).

Hurricane Rita made landfall September 24, after the September reference period. The impact of this event did not warrant changes to QCEW methodology for the third quarter of 2005.

TECHNICAL NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and State published data may be due to the continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 7 largest counties in Indiana, third quarter 2005(2)

| Area | Employment | Average Weekly Wage (3) | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|
| | September 2005 (thousands) | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level (4) | Percent change, third quarter 2004-05 (5) | National ranking by percent change (4) |
| United States (6) | 132,929.3 | \$777 | -- | 6.1 | -- |
| Indiana | 2,916.3 | 689 | 29 | 5.2 | 40 |
| Allen, Ind. | 182.7 | 683 | 227 | 4.0 | 263 |
| Elkhart, Ind. | 126.8 | 687 | 214 | 4.4 | 248 |
| Hamilton, Ind. | 96.9 | 795 | 99 | 4.7 | 232 |
| Lake, Ind. | 195.6 | 700 | 199 | 4.5 | 244 |
| Marion, Ind. | 584.0 | 819 | 81 | 7.1 | 71 |
| St. Joseph, Ind. | 126.7 | 666 | 250 | -0.1 | 310 |
| Vanderburgh, Ind. | 108.5 | 676 | 235 | 7.5 | 56 |

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

(5) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(6) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, third quarter 2005(2)

| State | Employment | Average weekly wage (3) | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | September 2005 (thousands) | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level | Percent change, third quarter 2004-05 | National ranking by percent change |
| United States (4) | 132,929.3 | \$777 | - | 6.1 | - |
| Alabama | 1,905.9 | 669 | 32 | 6.4 | 17 |
| Alaska | 320.2 | 797 | 13 | 5.6 | 30 |
| Arizona | 2,511.8 | 748 | 20 | 8.2 | 1 |
| Arkansas | 1,165.7 | 599 | 46 | 4.9 | 43 |
| California | 15,443.3 | 887 | 6 | 7.0 | 8 |
| Colorado | 2,212.1 | 808 | 11 | 7.3 | 7 |
| Connecticut | 1,655.2 | 966 | 2 | 5.3 | 38 |
| Delaware | 420.1 | 823 | 9 | 7.0 | 8 |
| District of Columbia | 666.4 | 1,265 | 1 | 4.5 | 48 |
| Florida | 7,801.6 | 708 | 26 | 8.1 | 2 |
| Georgia | 3,960.8 | 748 | 20 | 5.2 | 40 |
| Hawaii | 606.0 | 714 | 24 | 5.8 | 23 |
| Idaho | 635.5 | 605 | 45 | 6.0 | 19 |
| Illinois | 5,820.7 | 825 | 8 | 5.9 | 21 |
| Indiana | 2,916.3 | 689 | 29 | 5.2 | 40 |
| Iowa | 1,461.1 | 641 | 37 | 6.1 | 18 |
| Kansas | 1,315.3 | 659 | 34 | 6.5 | 15 |
| Kentucky | 1,779.5 | 651 | 35 | 5.2 | 40 |
| Louisiana | 1,770.8 | 637 | 39 | 6.9 | 10 |
| Maine | 606.0 | 631 | 42 | 4.6 | 46 |
| Maryland | 2,526.5 | 854 | 7 | 7.6 | 5 |
| Massachusetts | 3,193.3 | 947 | 3 | 4.5 | 48 |
| Michigan | 4,353.1 | 787 | 15 | 4.1 | 50 |
| Minnesota | 2,671.9 | 790 | 14 | 4.9 | 43 |
| Mississippi | 1,098.4 | 573 | 49 | 5.9 | 21 |
| Missouri | 2,696.2 | 691 | 27 | 5.5 | 33 |
| Montana | 424.2 | 563 | 51 | 7.4 | 6 |
| Nebraska | 896.7 | 633 | 41 | 5.3 | 38 |
| Nevada | 1,242.5 | 750 | 19 | 6.7 | 12 |
| New Hampshire | 630.7 | 772 | 16 | 5.8 | 23 |
| New Jersey | 3,960.8 | 928 | 5 | 5.8 | 23 |
| New Mexico | 791.0 | 629 | 43 | 6.8 | 11 |
| New York | 8,394.8 | 941 | 4 | 5.7 | 26 |
| North Carolina | 3,903.7 | 690 | 28 | 5.7 | 26 |
| North Dakota | 335.4 | 581 | 48 | 6.0 | 19 |
| Ohio | 5,360.6 | 723 | 23 | 5.5 | 33 |
| Oklahoma | 1,482.5 | 612 | 44 | 5.7 | 26 |
| Oregon | 1,683.4 | 714 | 24 | 5.6 | 30 |
| Pennsylvania | 5,597.6 | 764 | 18 | 5.7 | 26 |
| Rhode Island | 488.9 | 736 | 22 | 4.1 | 50 |
| South Carolina | 1,831.2 | 637 | 39 | 5.6 | 30 |
| South Dakota | 381.6 | 567 | 50 | 5.4 | 35 |
| Tennessee | 2,724.0 | 689 | 29 | 4.6 | 46 |
| Texas | 9,659.3 | 767 | 17 | 6.7 | 12 |
| Utah | 1,135.1 | 647 | 36 | 6.6 | 14 |
| Vermont | 303.4 | 663 | 33 | 4.7 | 45 |
| Virginia | 3,617.7 | 815 | 10 | 7.7 | 4 |
| Washington | 2,820.6 | 801 | 12 | 6.5 | 15 |
| West Virginia | 702.9 | 589 | 47 | 5.4 | 35 |
| Wisconsin | 2,783.4 | 688 | 31 | 5.4 | 35 |
| Wyoming | 263.4 | 638 | 38 | 8.0 | 3 |
| Puerto Rico | 1,037.4 | 435 | (5) | 3.8 | (5) |
| Virgin Islands | 44.0 | 616 | (5) | 2.8 | (5) |

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(5) Data not included in the national ranking.